

The logo for Multiplay drama, featuring the word "multiplay" in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font, with "drama" in a smaller font below it, and a white play button icon to the right.

multiplay
drama

Blue

Joe Ward Munrow

The logo for NH&B, consisting of the letters "N", "H", and "B" stacked vertically in a white serif font, each letter enclosed in a small white square.

N
H
B

Characters

ANNA, a new support worker, band three

BOBBY, an experienced support worker, band three

CARL, nurse, band five

JON, diagnosed with depression

LUCY, diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia

MATTY, diagnosed with bipolar disorder

RICKY, diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia

SARAH, a clinical psychologist

Setting

An inpatient mental health unit in the UK.

Note on Text

A dash (–) at the beginning of the line indicates a change of speaker.

A slash (/) indicates when the next line should begin.

Speech in [square brackets] is intention and not to be spoken.

1.

- Sits between
- The broken thighs
- Of a pretty song's
- Attempts
- To fuck itself together.
- Meanders
- Gone
- Went
- Left
- Wending
- Through
- The basin and the river.
- And me and myself
- And the
- Child-proof safety catch.
- That rose
- And rises
- Left and went
- Upped and gone
- And went and left.
- But mainly gone.
- / Of rule words
- Rude worlds
- and weeps and breaks
- And breaks again.
- Shining spinning / sinning upwards
- Singing / upwards
- And sinning / upwards
- But singing / upwards
- And sinning / upwards

- Singing / upwards
- And sinning / upwards.
- Sits there
- A gleaming empty loss
- Crouched and hard
- Spinning
- As
- Unearthed / and
- Unvoiced threats.
- Turn
- And
- The empty bicycle
- Abandoned in the road
- Laughs at you.
- It sits there now,
- The end of the bed
- Like a short heavy cat
- Sits cold and heavy
- Like sheets when you were seven.–
- Ten.
- Eleven.
- Footsteps.
- Ten eleven.
- Footsteps.
- Ten or eleven.
- Footsteps.
- Running through your bones
- Running through your calcium.
- Running through your chalk.
- Ten or eleven
- Footsteps.
- Sits
- cold and heavy
- like

– running away
– running away
– running away.

Silence.

2.

Nominally the staffroom.

Beat.

BOBBY. And there's the kettle.

Pause.

ANNA. That's it...?

Beat.

BOBBY. Well, that's the kettle yeah... it's. I mean it does look a bit shit but it does its job so...

ANNA. No, I mean, that's it, that's...

BOBBY. Oh yeah, sorry, I'm a dickhead, yeah, that's the end of the induction yeah.

ANNA. Right...

Beat.

Is there anything else?

BOBBY. –

ANNA. I mean apart from where the fire exits are. And the, the kettle.

BOBBY. Erm.

You've done the PowerPoint, haven't you.

ANNA. Yeah, I've done the PowerPoint.

Pause.

BOBBY *shrugs, shakes his head.*

Any... tips?

BOBBY. –

ANNA. I mean, I'm guessing you're taking me on the induction because you're experienced and...

BOBBY. I wouldn't always bet on that.

ANNA. But you've been here a while.

BOBBY. Yeah, a bit, yeah.

ANNA. Longer than me...

BOBBY. Yeah.

ANNA. So any advice, like, personal advice?

Beat.

BOBBY. Mmm.

Make full use of the fist-bump.

Beat.

ANNA. The fist-bump.

BOBBY. Yes.

Pause.

BOBBY *proffers fist.*

Spud me.

ANNA *reluctantly bumps fists with him.*

Yeah, I can't really pull off saying 'spud me' but yeah...

ANNA. I'm not being rude but, are you taking the piss?

BOBBY. Wha'?

ANNA. Are you taking the piss? I don't mind if you are, it's just...

BOBBY. No. No. Why?

ANNA. Well, I ask you for advice and you tell me to make full use of the fist-bump.

BOBBY. Yeah.

ANNA. Well, how is that advice? I mean how is that useful in any way...?

Beat.

BOBBY. Well firstly, for starters, you look cool.

Secondly, it's safe, it means that no one can grab hold of your fingers or your hand.

And thirdly, the fist-bump guarantees that the only fecal matter on the palm of your hand is your own.

ANNA. –

BOBBY. And that's not even a dig at the service users, some of the clinicians around here are suspiciously fast off the throne.

Pause.

ANNA. The fist-bump.

BOBBY *nods.*

How long have you been here?

BOBBY. Eight years.

Beat.

ANNA. Right.

BOBBY. Yeah.

Pause.

I'm Bobby by the way.

ANNA. Anna.

Goes to offer hand, catches herself, turns it into a fist.

He smiles. They bump fists.

BOBBY. The fist-bump.

ANNA. The fist-bump.

3.

MATTY *and* JON *sit staring at a draughts board.*

MATTY *moves.*

MATTY. King me then.

JON *just looks at him.*

King me then.

JON *just looks at him.*

I got to the end of the fucking board, mate, king me.

Beat.

King me.

JON *kings him.*

What was the hold-up, ey? What's the delay?

JON *shrugs.*

Fucking...

Pause. Can hear MATTY's heavy breathing in the silence.

It's your move, you know.

I said it's your move, you know.

I said it's your move, you know.

Beat.

JON. I know.

Pause.

MATTY. Make it then.

Make your move then.

Jesus Christ on a fucking tricycle.

Oi. I said make your move then.

JON. I can't.

MATTY. Why not?

JON. I'm not ready.

MATTY. What do you mean you're not ready?

JON just looks at him.

You only got two of these fucking things, man. This one can go here or here and this one can go here or here.

JON. –

MATTY. It's not exactly brain surgery.

Pause.

Make the move or I'm going to turn this fucking board fucking upside down.

Long pause.

JON makes his move. MATTY counters and take his piece.

Pause.

Come on, man.

Come on, man.

Come on, man!

Looks up, acknowledges an authoritative presence we can't see, a hand up, an apology or promise to keep it down.

Pause.

You've got one piece left. And it can make one of two moves. Either move it makes I'm gonna eat the fucker up so just hurry up and make it.

Beat.

JON. Do you know how to play chess?

MATTY. With the horses?

JON. Yeah.

MATTY. No.

Pause.

JON *moves*. MATTY *counters, game over*.

Pause. A real sense of relief, release.

Jesus Christ on a fucking...

Beat.

That shouldn't have taken as long as it fucking did.

Pause.

Want another one?

JON. –

4.

Therapy session, RICKY and SARAH.

SARAH. Is that useful?

RICKY. Is what useful?

SARAH. Is it useful to say, or to think, that you're not in control?

RICKY. I don't know. It feels true. I know that I'm not supposed to say that but...

SARAH. This isn't about what you're supposed to say, it's about saying what you actually feel, and think.

RICKY. Yeah but if I say how I actually feel then the sessions take longer.

SARAH. They don't take longer. They're always an hour.

Beat.

RICKY. Well, they feel longer.

Beat.

SARAH. Why do you think the sessions take longer if you say how you feel?

RICKY. Because we're... (*Vague gesture.*)

SARAH. You feel that we're in conflict?

RICKY *shrugs. Then nods.*

Maybe it feels more difficult. But sometimes difficult things are, y'know, the things that are worthwhile. But I agree when things seem difficult, they can feel longer.

RICKY. Yeah.

You kiss a pretty girl for an hour and it feels like a minute. You put your hand for on a hot cooker for a minute and it feels like an hour.

Do you know who said that?

SARAH. Was it Einstein?

RICKY. Yeah.

The clumsy perv.

SARAH. What?

RICKY. The clumsy perv.

SARAH. Why clumsy?

RICKY. Who puts their hand on a hot cooker? I never have and I'm pretty clumsy.

Beat.

SARAH. Last time we met you said you were feeling very anxious. Is the thought of conflict one of those things that makes you feel anxious?

Nods.

Why?

RICKY. Because it means someone getting hurt.

SARAH. Is that always the case?

Beat.

Does conflict always mean someone always getting hurt?

Beat.

When you said that the sessions felt longer and I said that they were always an hour, we were in conflict then. But did either of us get hurt?

Beat.

RICKY. No.

SARAH. No. So conflict doesn't always lead to people getting hurt.

Beat.

Does it?

RICKY. No.

Beat.

SARAH. And in this room, in these sessions, I'd like you to be honest about how you feel because that's how we can work through any problems that you're experiencing and issues that you're dealing with.

RICKY. Yeah but when I'm honest that's when...

SARAH. When what?

RICKY. When stuff starts happening.

SARAH. What do you mean? That's when the voices that you hear start talking to you?

RICKY. No. I mean they're always... about.

SARAH. So what do you mean then?

RICKY. That's when things start going wrong with me. With you guys.

SARAH. What do you mean by that?

RICKY. That's when, when I'm honest, that's when you say I'm wrong. That my angels aren't real. And that's when you start to dose me up, give me drugs and...

SARAH. So you feel, it's when you start to tell the truth that's when –

RICKY. Yeah.

SARAH. That –

RICKY. Things start to go wrong yeah.

*

A Nick Hern Book

Blue first published in Great Britain in 2019 as a digital exclusive by Nick Hern Books Limited, The Glasshouse, 49a Goldhawk Road, London W12 8QP

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Cover image: shutterstock.com/Stefano Tammaro

Designed and typeset by Nick Hern Books, London

ISBN 978 1 78850 105 7

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